



BILL RICHARDSON
GOVERNOR

State of New Mexico
ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT
Office of the Secretary
Harold Runnels Building
1190 St. Francis Drive, P.O. Box 26110
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87502-6110
Telephone (505) 827-2855
Fax (505) 827-2836



RON CURRY
SECRETARY

DERRITH WATCHMAN-MOORE
DEPUTY SECRETARY

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Contact: Jon Goldstein, NMED Communications Dir.
Phone: (505) 827-0314

Environment Department Accepts Intel Proposals for Additional Emissions Testing, Requires Further Actions

(Santa Fe, NM) — The New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) today released its analysis of additional emissions information provided by Intel's Rio Rancho facility. This information, provided in response to NMED's June 30 request, concerned emissions during malfunctions and scheduled maintenance of Intel's air pollution control equipment for volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and hazardous air pollutants (HAPs). This information had been requested to verify that Intel is abiding by its air quality permit.

"NMED is satisfied with Intel's agreement to voluntarily test its emissions when its pollution controls have gone down during malfunctions, maintenance or repair," said Jim Norton, Director of NMED's Environmental Protection Division. "This cooperation will help us ensure compliance with air quality regulations that help protect the health of local citizens."

Under New Mexico's air quality regulations, emissions controls are only allowed to be off during startup, shutdown, scheduled maintenance, or malfunction of the unit. To show compliance with this regulation, permittees are required to submit reports to NMED describing the event, the resulting emissions, and the corrective action taken to correct the problem. NMED had requested additional information to determine whether several events at Intel violated permit conditions governing the operation of air pollution control equipment.

After careful review of the additional emissions information submitted by Intel, NMED found that all but 10 recent events were not permit violations. For the 10 events that constituted permit violations, NMED required Intel to take specific corrective actions and to report the results to the NMED. The 10 events involved air pollution control equipment that failed to maintain a minimum combustion temperature, air pollution control equipment with low water sump levels, inadequate preventative maintenance procedures, and operator error. NMED has also accepted Intel's voluntary proposals for additional testing of air pollution control equipment during malfunctions and scheduled maintenance, as well as Intel's proposal to submit more detailed information for future downtime events.

While the 10 events violated reporting requirements in Intel's air permit, the emissions of VOCs and HAPs from these events were far below the emission limits set in Intel's permit, with emissions totaling about 0.0182 tons of VOCs and 0.0008 tons of HAPs.

For further information contact Jon Goldstein, Communications Director, NMED at (505) 827-0314.

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